



Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75). c. 175-225 CE.  
Gospel of John, vv.1 ff. Vatican Library

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## Religion, Exegesis, And The Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority

One of the many questions I have sought to answer over the past decades concerns religion, exegesis, and the Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority; and in particular regarding religions which rely on written texts such as in the matter of Christianity the texts of the New Testament, the oldest of which were written in Hellenistic Greek. <sup>1</sup>

However, and again in the matter of Christianity, most of the followers of that religion depended on, and depend upon, translations of such written texts with, for example, Ministers and preachers and others quoting whatever translation(s) they accepted or accept when sermonizing about Christianity. In effect, therefore, they were mostly unknowingly committing the Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority <sup>2</sup> with regard to the translation or translations they accepted or accept as their authority. In effect, their faith, their belief, was and is rooted in others, not in their own research using primary sources and on logical deductions based on that research.

in the matter of Christianity this committance of the Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority resulted in accusations of heresy, in schisms, in reformation, counter-reformation, with the attendant conflicts, intolerance, personal suffering, imprisonment, and deaths. Basically because one side believed (often fanatically, as in the matter of Cromwellian English Puritans) that they were 'right' and doing God's work. Was Cromwell, for example, or any of his followers, familiar with the Hellenistic Greek text of the New Testament and did their own translations of those texts and thus made decisions based on such translations? Or did they simply accept some translation or translations as their authority and thus committed the Fallacy Of Appeal To Authority?

Which questioning was one reason I developed my individualistic philosophy (pedantically, weltanschauung) of pathei-mathos where it is personal empathy, pathei-mathos, and personal research using primary sources, <sup>3</sup> which inform and guide us. In the matter of Christianity my research inclined me to conclude that Johannine Christianity as evident in τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον (the Gospel according to John) was "the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations," <sup>4</sup> with my interpretation of τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον (the Gospel according to Matthew) chapter 5, verses 1-10, <sup>5</sup> also suggesting similar sentiments.

In addition, in the 2024 text *The Johannine Weltanschauung* <sup>6</sup> I went so far as to suggest that there were several passages in the Gospel of John which inclined me to answer a question I had posed in my 2017 monograph *Tu Es Diaboli lanua*, of whether:

"a Christianity based only on the Gospel According to John - τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - [would] be different from, more numinous than, the Christianity derived from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the other texts included in what has become known as the Canonical New Testament, Καινὴ Διαθήκη? A Johannine Christianity where the Greek texts known as LXX, the Old Testament, were not regarded as 'the Word of God' - as divinely inspired and canonical - but rather as providing some historical background to the old, superseded, logos of Mosaic law and of 'the Prophets'. Would such a Johannine Christianity be a Weltanschauung - a particular and individual apprehension or interpretation of Reality - rather than a religion with all that a religion implies in terms of hierarchy and dogma? With the contrast being, in the words of

Tertullian, Post vetera exempla originalium personarum aeque ad vetera transeamus instrumenta legalium scripturarum." <sup>7</sup>

I then proceeded, in that 2024 text, to analyze those passages in detail, providing in the footnotes the Greek texts and commenting on my translation of those texts, such as οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ from v.22 of chapter five.

However, these and other such interpretations were and are only my personal fallible ones and therefore have no authority external to me. Which is one reason why my preferred way of life now is a personal, wordless, contemplative, appreciation of the numinous in the immediacy of the living moment, and not the wordful way of religions, of ideologies, of causal abstractions, of ideas, contemporary, organized, or otherwise.

David Myatt  
November 2024

1. For instance, Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75) dating from c.175-225 CE, qv. [https://www.vaticanlibrary.va/moduli/BodmerVoicu\\_ing.pdf](https://www.vaticanlibrary.va/moduli/BodmerVoicu_ing.pdf)
2. qv. *Research, Primary Sources, And Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/myatt-a-neglected-aspect.pdf>
3. As I noted in *Research, Primary Sources, And Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit,  
  
"Among primary sources are original manuscripts germane to the subject or to a historical person, such as in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, Papyrus Bodmer in the Vatican Library, and in the case of Sappho fragments of papyri such as P. Oxyrhynchus. XV, 1787 fr. 1 and 2; archaeological or fossil remains from an historical period; contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews, speeches, and other materials which describe or relate (i) events in which a person or persons participated in or observers of, (ii) ideas or creations, such as music, a philosophy, works of literature, poetry, and art-work which a person was responsible for and also their published writings in their original language, and authenticated manuscripts published and unpublished.  
  
The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about such subjects or persons are secondary sources, with tertiary sources a collection or compendium of such secondary sources. In regard to the original language of primary sources, if a person venturing an opinion about such material cannot read the original language, and does not personally translate such a work or passages from such a work and thus has to use the translations of others then opinions and conclusions about that work are secondary sources."
4. *The Johannine Weltanschauung*, included in *Selected Writings 2012-2024*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/dwm-selected-writings-second-edition.pdf>
5. The Beatitudes, included in *Selected Writings*, op.cit
6. The work sans the Appendices and with a correction to the footnotes - the omitted footnote [2] has been added - is included below as an Appendix. The essay with Appendices and corrected footnotes is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/johannine-weltanschauung.pdf>
7. Tu Es Diaboli Ianua, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

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## Appendix

### The Johannine Weltanschauung

#### Preface

In verse 26 of Chapter Four of The Gospel of John (τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον) Jesus, speaking to a Samaritan woman, is recorded as saying: Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ λαλῶν σοι.

The first part - Ἐγώ εἰμι - literally means "I am." Most translations insert 'he' - "I am he" - which in my view seems to somewhat lessen the impact of what Jesus says, which is that he just "is", beyond causality itself and thus beyond any manifestation of Being - on Earth - as "a being", be such a 'being' the mortal Messiah or some other mortal. Expressed less philosophically, Jesus says that it is the divinity who is speaking to her: "it is *I AM* who is speaking to you," which expression is what I, during my short perambulation as a Catholic monk wrote, near the verse in the margin of my copy of τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον.

Revisiting such marginalia decades later during my translation of and commentary on eight tractates of the Corpus

Hermeticum, I began to translate the Gospel itself and which translation and the accompanying commentary <sup>[1]</sup> given the relevance of the Gospel to particular verses in some of those tractates, for example φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος (phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being) from the Pœmandres tractate and ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν (Who was Life and which Life was the Phaos of human beings. And the Phaos illuminates the dark and is not overwhelmed by the dark) from Chapter One of John.

This led to further questions some of which I discuss here.

David Myatt  
Feria sexta in Parasceve  
2024 CE

[1] Volume One: *The Gospel According To John*, Chapter 1 -5, Translation and Commentary, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

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## A Rhetorical Question

In my 2017 monograph *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* I asked if:

"a Christianity based only on the Gospel According to John - τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - be different from, more numinous than, the Christianity derived from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the other texts included in what has become known as the Canonical New Testament, Καινὴ Διαθήκη? A Johannine Christianity where the Greek texts known as LXX, the Old Testament, were not regarded as 'the Word of God' - as divinely inspired and canonical - but rather as providing some historical background to the old, superseded, logos of Mosaic law and of 'the Prophets'. Would such a Johannine Christianity be a Weltanschauung - a particular and individual apprehension or interpretation of Reality - rather than a religion with all that a religion implies in terms of hierarchy and dogma? With the contrast being, in the words of Tertullian, Post vetera exempla originalium personarum aequè ad vetera transeamus instrumenta legalium scripturarum." [1]

The origin of such a questioning was threefold: (α) my translation of the Gospel of John [2], (β) what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus, such as the expression "let us then try what love can do" from William Penn's *Some Fruits of Solitude*, with all three, according to my reading, emphasizing the importance of love; and (γ) what I sometimes felt as a monk in Choir when passages from the Old Testament regarding 'fire, brimstone, vengeance' - which seemed to me to be discordant with love - were chanted as part of Liturgia Horarum or, often as part of a Mass, read out.

Apropos (α) there were several significant passages from that Gospel which inclined me to consider whether the life and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth annulled the Old Testament both as a guide to understanding and appreciating Theos, the supreme deity, and as a guide to daily life and remembrance through ritual and prayer, with the proviso that my answers were and are just my fallible answers just as my translation, or rather interpretation of meaning, of that Gospel was fallible and neither possessed nor professed any authority.

The first significant passage was from Chapter Five, with the Greek text and my commentary on the passage provided in footnote [3], with my use in my translation of the term Judaeans, rather than the traditional 'Jews', explained in Appendix One.

18 The Judaeans were even more determined to kill him since not only had he annulled the Sabbath but also because he spoke of Theos as his Father, presenting himself as equal to Theos.  
19 In response, Jesus said to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that the son is not able to do anything on his own: only that which he observes his father doing. For whatever the father does, the son also does,  
20 For the father loves the son and reveals to him all that he does. And, beyond this, he will reveal to him greater works which shall astonish you  
21 Since just as the father awakens the dead, and gives life, so also the son gives life by design to whomsoever,  
22 For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son  
23 So that all might honour the son as they honour the father. And whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him.  
24 Verily, verily, I say unto you that whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting and is not entered into the choosing but passes from death into life.  
25 Verily, verily, I say unto you that a season is arriving, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Theos and those who listen shall live.  
26 Just as the father possesses Life within himself so he gifted the son with Life within him,  
27 And also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing.

Are the following phrases indicative? "He annulled the Sabbath", "for the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son", "whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him",

"whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting", "gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing".

The second passage was from Chapter Three, with the Greek text and my commentary on the passage provided in footnote [4],

16 For Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

17 For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him.

18 Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

19 And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful.

20 For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed.

21 But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

Of significance here are: "so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting", "their deeds were harmful", "anyone who does what is mean", and "lest their deeds be exposed".

As noted in my commentary [4] this expresses something somewhat different from the conventional translations of this passage such as this from the King James Bible:

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

There is a personal trust instead of a believiing; harmful deeds instead of 'evil' deeds; being mean instead of being 'evil', and being manifest instead of being 'exposed'.

The third passage returns us to Chapter Five, with the Greek text and my commentary on the passage provided in footnote [5]

1 Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem.

2 And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades

3 In which were a large number of the infirm - the blind, the limping, the withered - awaiting a change in the water

4 Since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

5 And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm.

6 Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

7 The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

8 Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

9 And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

10 Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

11 To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

12 So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk around?"

13 But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

14 Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

15 The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete.

16 And thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath.

Again, and as noted in my commentary, [5] this expresses something somewhat different from the conventional

translations of this passage such as this also from the King James Bible:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

There is, most noticeably, Envoy of Theos (ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου) instead of 'angel', 'no more missteps' instead of 'sin no more' and harass (διώκω) instead of 'persecute' with my interpretation of ἁμαρτία as 'error' or 'mistake' or here as 'misstep' rather than 'sin' explained in the Introduction of my translation:

(i) In 8.7 I have eschewed the common translation of ἁμαρτία by English word 'sin' and which English word, through centuries of Christian exegesis and preaching, has become a theological abstraction and a pejorative term, whereas the original meaning of the English word syn imputed the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; of in some way overstepping the bounds or transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus of accepting responsibility for such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

While my translation of 'mistake' (in 8.7) and 'error' (in 1.29) may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, [6] and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus the interpretation of this particular verse is "So, as they continued to ask he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake throw the first stone at her."

(ii) In 1.10 - ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾧ καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο - I take the sense of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾧ as suggesting not that "he was in the world" but rather that he was "of the world", among - with - those of the world, with his mortal body subject to pain and bodily death, with καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο thus implying not that "the world was made/created through him" but that the world was presenced in him, past, present, and future, with the English word 'presenced' - etymon: Latin praesentia - suggested by how he came to be embodied, presenced, in the Eucharist (qv. the phrase "This same presence may be called moste fitly, a reall presence, that is a presence not fained, but a true & a faythfull presence," in John Foxe's *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history: contaynyng the Actes and monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges tyme in this realme*, 1570).

## Vexata Quaestio

The question is one of not only the interpretation of particular Hellenistic (κοινὴ) Greek words, such as ἁμαρτία, which over centuries have acquired various meanings not necessarily germane to the milieu of the author of the Gospel attributed to John, but also the authority of the ancient Church which pronounced what constituted Christian belief and doctrine and thus what was considered to be heresy. Thus, to provide just one example, the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum θεὸς and the denotatum ὁ θεὸς in the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical.

In this context my interpretation of John, evident in the above three passages, may well be heretical because it presents both a different Jesus and a different teaching where he annuls not only the Judaeen Sabbath but also the authority of the Old Testament since he is gifted by Theos "with the authority of choosing" with anyone trusting in him having "life everlasting".

Thus, it could be argued that Jesus abrogates the Old Testament because it is no longer needed since "whomsoever



hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting," with the Logos as expounded in the Gospel of John:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος [Chapter One, v.2]

In primacy was the logos, and the logos was with Theos, and the logos was Theos.

καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός), πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας [Chapter One, v.14]

And the Logos became corporeal and dwelt among us and we perceived his numinosity, the numinosity of the only begotten of the Father, abounding in veritas, benevolence.

Apropos authority and Christianity, and the 'heresy' or unorthodoxy of various interpretations of texts, the schisms, the reformations and divisions, over the past two millennia, my answer derives from one of the the axioms of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos: that it is the empathy and the pathei-mathos of individuals which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself. Which, given the personal and the individual nature of empathy and pathei-mathos, implies that it is for us as individuals to decide.

My own pathei-mathos inclines me to favour the message of personal love, of humility, of trying not to repeat our mistakes, of appreciating that there is some-thing, a type of Being, beyond and more powerful than us and whatever we bring-into-being be it an idea, an ideology, a creed, a nation, a State, a jurisprudence, or an Empire. Some of us may name this Being as 'God'; or θεὸς or 'the gods' to which they give personal names. Some may describe it, as many hermeticists do, as The One, The Monas, The Father who is both male and female: ἀρρενόθηλυσ. [7]

I have discovered this message in the Gospel of John; in the Corpus Hermeticum; in many of the writings of Cicero; in the poetry of Sappho and TS Eliot; in the music of JS Bach; and in many other writings and Cræfts ancient and modern. [8]



## Notes

[1] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

[2] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

[3]

### Text:

<sup>18</sup> διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μᾶλλον ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυε τὸ σάββατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγε τὸν Θεόν, ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ Θεῷ. <sup>19</sup> Ἀπεκρίνατο οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδέν, ἐὰν μή τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα· ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ. <sup>20</sup> ὁ γὰρ πατὴρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱόν, καὶ πάντα δεικνυσιν αὐτῷ ἃ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ· καὶ μείζονα τούτων δείξει αὐτῷ ἔργα, ἵνα ὑμεῖς θαυμάζητε. <sup>21</sup> ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὓς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ. <sup>22</sup> οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκε τῷ υἱῷ. <sup>23</sup> ἵνα πάντες τιμῶσι τὸν υἱόν, καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα. ὁ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν υἱόν, οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν πατέρα τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν. <sup>24</sup> ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων, καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντί με, ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον· καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν. <sup>25</sup> ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, ὅτε οἱ νεκροὶ ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ οἱ ἀκούσαντες ζήσονται. <sup>26</sup> ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως ἔδωκε καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ. <sup>27</sup> καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ καὶ κρίσιν ποιεῖν, ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστί.

### Commentary:

18. *annulled the Sabbath*. ἔλυεν τὸ σάββατον. They were more determined to kill Jesus not because he himself had 'broken' the Sabbath but because they believed he had publicly 'annulled' (λύω) the Sabbath by telling someone to do what the Judeans regarded as impermissible, and thus, by now equating himself to Theos, seemed desirous of replacing their Judean laws with new laws of his own.

19. *on his own*. ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ. Literally, of/from himself. The verse itself is evocative of a human son learning by observing what his father does.

21. *awakens*. Given the following ζωοποιέω - 'make alive, give life' - I am inclined to take the general sense of ἐγείρω - 'wake' - rather than the specific 'raise up' and which "raising up of the dead" now implies certain post-Hellenic iconographies.

22. *For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son.* οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ. The preceding θέλει and the context suggest κρίνω as 'choose' not 'judge', and which interpretation imparts a somewhat different meaning from the conventional one which involves Jesus giving life to 'whomsoever he wishes' and judging them; and a different meaning given how the term 'judgement' has for over two thousand years been interpreted in relation to the Old and the New Testaments.

Instead of such later interpretations, the Evangelist describes how Jesus simply gives life by design because his father - Theos - has given the task of choosing to his son. Which is why Jesus previously said (4:34)

Ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον

My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

Thus here Jesus is affirming that he is indeed annulling the laws of the old covenant: it is he who now chooses who has life everlasting. Cf. Deuteronomy 32:39, 2 Kings 5:7, et seq.

24. *not entered into the choosing.* εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται. Literally, "does not go to Choosing" - in conventional terms, does not go into judgement - because having heard, and trusted the father through the son, they already have the gift of life everlasting and thus pass straight from death to that new life.

25. *shall hear ... have listened.* ἀκούσουσιν ... ἀκούσαντες. The literal "shall hear" and "that hear" does not clearly express what is meant.

27. *and also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing.* καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν. Literally, "and he gifted him with authority to undertake choosing because he is the son of a mortal." Which explains the following μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο, "be not astonished at this". In regard to υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου as 'son of a mortal' instead of Son of Man, qv. the comment on 1:51. Also, cf. 9:35, Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, which makes perfect sense if Jesus is asking "Do you trust the son of a mortal?" but is somewhat problematic if conventionally interpreted as "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

[4]

#### Text

<sup>16</sup> Οὕτω γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. <sup>17</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνῃ τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ' ἵνα σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ. <sup>18</sup> ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται, ὅτι μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. <sup>19</sup> αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ κρίσις, ὅτι τὸ φῶς ἐλήλυθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἠγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον τὸ σκότος ἢ τὸ φῶς· ἦν γὰρ πονηρὰ αὐτῶν τὰ ἔργα. <sup>20</sup> πᾶς γὰρ ὁ φαῦλα πράσσων μισεῖ τὸ φῶς, καὶ οὐκ ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸ φῶς, ἵνα μὴ ἐλεγχθῇ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. <sup>21</sup> ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸ φῶς, ἵνα φανερωθῇ αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι ἐν Θεῷ ἐστὶν εἰργασμένα. <sup>22</sup> Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν· καὶ ἐκεῖ διέτριβε μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐβάπτιζεν. <sup>23</sup> ἦν δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων ἐν Αἰνῶν ἐγγὺς τοῦ Σαλείμ, ὅτι ὕδατα πολλὰ ἦν ἐκεῖ· καὶ παρεγίνοντο καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο.

#### Commentary

19-20. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. For their deeds were harmful; that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he - as the only begotten son of Theos - knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

21. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose - who do not hide - who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal - about the character of people - and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing - the opposite of lying and of being deceitful - and not some impersonal 'truth'.

[5]

#### Text

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦν ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. <sup>2</sup> Ἔστι δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ κολυμβήθρα, ἡ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ Βηθεσδά, πέντε στοὰς ἔχουσα. <sup>3</sup> ἐν ταύταις κατέκειτο πλῆθος πολὺ τῶν ἀσθενούντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν, ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν. <sup>4</sup> ἄγγελος γὰρ κατὰ καιρὸν κατέβαινεν ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασσε τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγίνετο, ὃν δὴποτε κατείχετο νοσήματι. <sup>5</sup> ἦν δὲ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τριάκοντα καὶ ὀκτὼ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ. <sup>6</sup> τοῦτον ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς κατακείμενον, καὶ γνοὺς ὅτι πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει, λέγει αὐτῷ, Θέλεις ὑγιὴς γενέσθαι; <sup>7</sup> ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἀσθενῶν, Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα, ὅταν ταραχθῇ τὸ ὕδωρ, βάλλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν

ὧ δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγώ, ἄλλος πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει. <sup>8</sup> λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγεῖραι, ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου, καὶ περιπάτει. <sup>9</sup> καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἦρε τὸν κράββατον αὐτοῦ καὶ περιπάτει. Ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. <sup>10</sup> ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ, Σάββατόν ἐστιν· οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἄραι τὸν κράββατον. <sup>11</sup> ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς, Ὁ ποιήσας με ὑγιῆ, ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν, Ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου καὶ περιπάτει. <sup>12</sup> ἠρώτησαν οὖν αὐτόν, Τίς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ εἰπὼν σοι, Ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου καὶ περιπάτει; <sup>13</sup> ὁ δὲ ἰαθεὶς οὐκ ᾔδει τίς ἐστιν· ὁ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐξένευσεν, ὅχλου ὄντος ἐν τῷ τόπῳ. <sup>14</sup> μετὰ ταῦτα εὐρίσκει αὐτόν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ἴδε ὑγιὴς γέγονας· μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε, ἵνα μὴ χειρόν τί σοι γένηται. <sup>15</sup> ἀπῆλθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἀνήγγειλε τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ ποιήσας αὐτόν ὑγιῆ. <sup>16</sup> καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον τὸν Ἰησοῦν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ ἐζήτουν αὐτόν ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ.

## Commentary

2.

*the place of the sheep.* Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

*named in the language of the Hebrews.* ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

3.

*the infirm.* The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

*awaiting a change in the water.* Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

4. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ὥς δήποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. Although the verse is omitted in NA28, and generally regarded as an interpolation, I include it since it is in ASV, Tyndale, Wycliffe, KJV, and Douay-Rheims.

a) *envoy.* As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos.* Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English both as a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or deity.

c) *became complete.* ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

8. *bedroll.* κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

9. *And, directly, the man became complete.* καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

10. *treated.* Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

14. *no more missteps.* μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction regarding translating ἁμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

16. *harass.* διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

[6] My translation of The Beatitudes is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/the-beatitudes-v1.pdf>.



[7] qv. my *A Note On The Term Noesis In Tractate XIII*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

[8] Cræft: "this older spelling in an esoteric context implies [...] a particular Arte, the application of particular abilities, skills, and knowledge, especially abilities, skills, and knowledge learned or received in the traditional manner from a master of the Arte or Arts in question. In this esoteric sense, theos is the Master Craftsman, with Palingenesis being a Cræft, an Arte that "is not taught; rather, it is presented by and when the theos desires". *A Note On The Term Noesis In Tractate XIII*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, op.cit.

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Greek Bible text from:

Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th revised edition, Edited by Barbara Aland and others, 2012 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.

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